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HOUSING CONDITIONS

OF OLD AGE SECURITY RECIPIENTS IN ALAMEDA COUNTY

a survey made by
ALAMEDA COUNTY WELFARE DEPARTMENT

and

COUNCIL OF SOCIAL PLANNING - ALAMEDA COUNTY

SEPTEMBER 1961

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INTRODUCTION

In Alameda County, a County Committee on Aging under the Council of Social Planning worked for three years to survey the needs of senior citizens and to develop a plan for meeting such needs. When this task of surveying and planning was completed, the County Committee on Aging was disbanded. The work of implementation of the County Committee's plans now falls upon special citizen commissions appointed by the Board of Directors of the Council of Social Planning and given a limited period of time in which to complete a specific charge. The first of these citizen commissions is the Commission for the Development of Demonstration Housing for the Aged which starts its work in September 1961. Because this commission needs certain basic information to do its job, this survey was undertaken by the Council staff working in cooperation with the Alameda County Welfare Department. The object of the survey is:

1. To provide a rough guide as to the housing conditions of those recipients of Old Age Security who live in the community; that is, those who are not living in facilities specially licensed to care for the aged, such as old peoples homes, nursing homes, hospitals, boarding homes, convalescent homes, rest homes, etc.
2. To provide welfare workers with a definitive rating scale which will enable them to assess quickly, and in broad terms, the housing conditions of recipients of old age assistance.
3. To indicate the areas of the county which have concentrations of sub-standard housing occupied by older people known to the welfare department.
4. To give a rough guide as to housing needs in planning for senior citizens.

STUDY METHOD

1. A cover letter with a list of defects to look for in judging housing and a five-point rating scale was developed. (See pages 2 and 3.)
2. These materials were discussed with representatives of the Alameda County Welfare Department, and their cooperation in making staff time available for the survey was gained.
3. Supervisors in the welfare department briefed the workers on what was expected and answered their questions regarding the survey questionnaire schedule.
4. Complete schedules were returned to unit supervisors for checking before being tallied.
5. Each welfare worker was asked to write a description of the worst home on his list.

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COUNCIL OF SOCIAL PLANNING - ALAMEDA COUNTY
337 - 13 St., Oakland 12 TE. 4-3994

June 26, 1961

TO: Caseworkers in O. A. S.
FROM: Gladys Worthington
SUBJECT: Housing Conditions for Old Age Recipients

A Commission on Housing for the Aged will be getting underway in June. The job of this Commission will be to try to implement the housing report published by the County Committee on Aging in October 1959. In order to do a good job, this Commission needs to draw upon your experience as a front line worker who visits old people in their own homes daily. No one is in a better position than you to let this Commission know in general terms just what the conditions are in which old people live in Alameda County.

The attached rating sheet is set up to give us your quick impression of the homes you visit. We are not trying to do a research job here, but trying to ask for the opinion of the professionals closest to the problem. You will find five descriptive statements on housing. We hope you will be able to fit the actual number of homes you visit into one or another of the categories. Your assessment of the housing conditions in which your clients live will be used by the Commission on Housing for the Aged to guide whatever action they take to improve such housing.

We would appreciate having your report returned to your supervisor by
DATE: _____. We will furnish your supervisor with
copies of the results of this survey.

COUNCIL OF SOCIAL PLANNING - ALAMEDA COUNTY
337 - 13 St., Oakland 12
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June 26, 1961

TO: Caseworkers in O. A. S.
FROM: Gladys Worthington
SUBJECT: Housing Conditions for Old Age Residents

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We would appreciate having your report returned to your supervisor by _____ We will furnish your supervisor with

copies of the results of this survey.

COMMISSION ON HOUSING FOR THE AGED

Defects to Look For in Judging Housing Accommodations for the Aged

1. Stairs
Too steep, treads too narrow, bannisters unsafe, badly lighted, too many flights.
2. Plumbing
Communal use, i.e., shared with persons outside your client's immediate family, badly leaking, non-functioning, cold water only, stopped drains, any safety hazard.
3. Flooring
Areas unsafe from dry rot, termites, etc., abrupt, unmarked, or unlighted changes in level, slippery surfaces.
4. Over-crowding
 - a) Too many sharing same dwelling
 - b) Same room for too many functions
5. Inaccessibility
To shopping or church or public transportation
6. Lighting
Poor or uneven
7. Vermin infested
8. Poor ventilation
9. Needs decoration
10. Outdoor area is too large or too difficult to maintain
11. Dwelling is too large and requires too much time and energy to maintain.
12. Cost of Shelter - Too high in proportion to total budget, i.e., either the cost of repairs or the rental can make the cost of shelter disproportionately high.
13. Exit in case of fire or other disaster is difficult, complicated, or unsafe.
14. Describe briefly on another sheet of paper the poorest dwelling you visit in calling on an old age recipient.

COMMISSION ON HOUSING FOR THE AGED

Defects to look for in finding Housing Accommodations for the Aged

1. Stairs
Too steep, trends too narrow, handrails unsafe, badly lighted, too many flights.
2. Plumbing
Common use, i.e., shared with persons outside your client's immediate family, badly leaking, non-functioning, cold water only, stopped drains, any safety hazard.
3. Flooring
Areas unsafe from dry rot, termites, etc., abrupt, unmarked, or unlighted changes in level, slippery surfaces.
4. Over-crowding
a) Too many sharing same dwelling
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To shopping or church or public transportation
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12. Cost of Shelter - Too high in proportion to total budget, i.e., either the cost of repairs or the rental can make the cost of shelter disproportionately high.
13. Risk in case of fire or other disaster is difficult, complicated, or unsafe.
14. Describes briefly on another sheet of paper the poorest dwelling you visit in calling on an old age recipient.

ADEQUACY OF THE STUDY

According to the advance reports of the 1960 U. S. Census the total population of Alameda County is 908,209. Of this, 86,126 or 9.5% are age 65 or over. (1)

The sample covers only those older people who still live in the community and only those who receive Old Age Security. Some 1,500 old people in Alameda County, in addition to the sample, receive Old Age Security, but these recipients live in institutions of one type or another which are specially licensed for the aged. All of these persons were excluded from this report. In all, this report covers a total of 11,566 individuals (12.2% of the total population over 65 in Alameda County) visited by 42 welfare workers from the staff of Alameda County Welfare Department. Each worker, therefore, reported on an average of 275 recipients. The largest number reported by one worker in this report was 351; the lowest, 220, while the median point was 285.5. The variation in number of homes visited by a worker is explained by the fact that some workers are more experienced than others, and some are assigned to compact territories where cases cluster together. Others travel long distances to cover their assignment, and some carry cases outside the O. A. S. program.

No attempt has been made to get at the housing conditions of old people with limited income who are not known to the welfare department. There are probably housing problems in this group, particularly among foreign born older people without U. S. citizenship who have only recently become eligible for the Old Age Security Program.

Although a study of the number of violations of the housing code extant in dwellings occupied by senior citizens would be useful in planning and putting into action an accident prevention program, this study did not attempt to judge housing on such a technical level, since such professional and technical judgment is beyond the competency of social workers and should be left to the appropriate departments of local government. This report, therefore, reflects professional opinions of welfare workers backed by judgments and reinforced by the use of written definitions of housing defects and a written rating scale. It should not be treated as more than a general aid for use in planning.

Home Ownership and Tenancy among Old Age Security Recipients in Alameda County

In the number of home owners as against tenants the sample differs from the pattern reported nationally for the entire age group. Of the 11,566 recipients reported, 2,134, or 18%, own their own homes with clear title. A further 685 or 5.9% own their own homes but are carrying a mortgage. Totalling these two groups, gives 2,819, or 24.3% of the sample as home owners. To compare home ownership in our sample with home ownership for the entire age group throughout the United States, "the special census tabulations indicated that 2/3 (67%)

- (1) Source: Data prepared by FHA Office Zone VI Market Analyst (S.F.) from 1960 population for California (Advance Report) PC (A2) - 6; and special tabulation of Population for California Counties prepared by California State Department of Finance, Sacramento.

APPENDIX OF THE STUDY

According to the advance reports of the 1960 U. S. Census the total population of Alameda County is 908,209. Of this, 88,188 are age 65 or over. (1)

The sample covers only those older people who still live in the community and only those who receive Old Age Security. Some 1,500 old people in Alameda County, in addition to the sample, receive Old Age Security, but these recipients live in institutions of one type or another which are specially licensed for the aged. All of these persons were excluded from this report. In all, this report covers a total of 11,566 individuals (12.2% of the total population over 65 in Alameda County) visited by 42 welfare workers from the staff of Alameda County Welfare Department. Each worker, therefore, reported on an average of 275 recipients. The lowest number reported by one worker in this report was 35; the highest, 320, while the median point was 285.5. The variation in number of homes visited by a worker is explained by the fact that some workers are more experienced than others, and some are assigned to compact territories where cases cluster together. Others travel long distances to cover their assignment, and some carry cases outside the O. A. S. program.

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(1) Source: Data prepared by the Office of the State VI Market Analyst (S.V.) from 1960 population for California (Advance Report) PC (42) - 5; and special tabulation of population for California Counties prepared by California State Department of Finance, Sacramento.

of the older householders owned their own homes in 1950. Subsequent estimates (1955) by the Federal Reserve Board have indicated a continuance of this high percentage of home ownership." (2)

In accounting for this difference between the sample and the ownership figures nationally, several explanations can be suggested. The sample represents for the most part urban dwellers and national figures indicate that persons who live in cities tend to rent their dwellings rather than own their own homes. It is possible that recipients of Old Age Security who are not home owners may represent those old people who had less education, fewer skills, larger families, or who faced some medical or financial catastrophe and were thus unable to save toward the purchase of a home. Some may have owned a home and lost it through ill health, accident, unemployment, or business fluctuations. Some people may not have learned the habit of saving, or never have commanded sufficient income to permit saving. In this study, however, we have no data that explains the low incidence of home ownership.

Administratively, in a welfare department, definitions of owner and tenant can be set up easily, but in devising a questionnaire schedule, separating these two is sometimes difficult. It is hard to know where to put the person who has borrowed a trailer from a friend who has since died and whose relatives have not yet been located; or the old man who lives rent free in exchange for gardening.

Table 1.

Ownership and Tenancy	Number	Percent of Total
Own home, clear title	2,134	18.0
Own home, mortgaged	685	5.9
Tenants	6,703	58.8
Other	2,044	17.3
Totals	11,566	100.0

Table 1. shows 2,044 persons or 18% of the sample were classified as "other." These are the people who live with relatives or friends or who live in hotels or rooming houses. In other words, not in private dwellings which they maintain independently or in institutions specially licensed for the aged.

- (2) White House Conference on Aging, January 1961
Background Paper on Housing, Page 23

of the other householders owned their own homes in 1955. Subsequent estimates (1955) by the Federal Reserve Board have indicated a continuation of this high percentage of home ownership." (2)

In attempting to find differences between the sample and the ownership figures nationally, several explanations can be suggested. The sample represents for the most part urban dwellers and national figures indicate that persons who live in cities tend to rent their dwellings rather than own their own homes. It is possible that recipients of Old Age Security who are not home owners may represent those old people who had less education, fewer skills, larger families or who faced some medical or financial catastrophe and were thus unable to save toward the purchase of a home. Some may have owned a home and lost it through ill health, accident, unemployment, or business fluctuations. Some people may not have learned the habit of saving, or never have commanded sufficient income to permit saving. In this study, however, we have no data that explain the low incidence of home ownership.

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Table 1		
Ownership and Tenancy	Number	Percent of Total
Own home, clear title	2,131	33.0
Own home, mortgaged	665	2.9
Tenants	6,703	38.8
Other	2,044	17.3
Total	11,543	100.0

Table 1 shows 2,044 persons or 18% of the sample were classified as "other." These are the people who live with relatives or friends or who live in hotels or rooming houses. In other words, not in private dwellings which they maintain independently or in institutions specially licensed for the aged.

There is some variation in the pattern of home ownership in different parts of the county. For example, only 101 persons receiving O.A.S. (5.8%) own their own homes in West Oakland out of a total of 1,742 recipients living there, while in the Oakmont - Dimond - Seminary and Oak Knoll District, 543 (42%) persons out of 1,282 own their own homes. Other areas with a high proportion of home ownership were Unit 7 covering the Eastmont, Seminary, Elmhurst, Brookfield Village areas of Oakland, all of San Leandro and a portion of Hayward; and Unit 8 which covers Castro Valley, parts of Hayward, San Lorenzo, Livermore, Pleasanton, and Fremont. It includes Russell City and Union City, also. Unit 7 has 1,500 O.A.S. recipients. Of these, 561 or 37.4% own their own home, either clear or mortgaged, while in Unit 8 with 1,494 O.A.S. recipients, 505 or 33.7% own their own homes. Table 2. shows the variation between areas of the county in home ownership. Table 3. is a key to the areas included in each County Welfare Supervisory Unit.

There is some variation in the pattern of home ownership in different parts of the county. For example, only 10% of persons receiving O.A.S. (5.8%) own their own homes in West Oakland out of a total of 1,712 recipients living there, while in the Oakland - Diamond - Seminary and Oak Knoll District, 513 (42%) persons out of 1,382 own their own homes. Other areas with a high proportion of home ownership were Unit 7 covering the Eastmont, Seminary, Alameda, Brookfield Village areas of Oakland, all of San Leandro and a portion of Hayward; and Unit 8 which covers Castro Valley, parts of Hayward, San Lorenzo, Livermore, Pleasanton, and Fremont. It includes Russell City and Union City, also. Unit 7 has 1,500 O.A.S. recipients. Of these, 561 or 37.4% own their own home, either clear or mortgaged, while in Unit 8 with 1,421 O.A.S. recipients, 505 or 35.5% own their own homes. Table 2. shows the variation between areas of the county in home ownership. Table 3. is a key to the areas included in each County Welfare Supervisory Unit.

Table 2.

Comparison of Home Ownership by Areas

Unit	Own Home Clear Title		Own Home Mortgaged		Rent		Other		Totals	
	Num- ber	%	Num- ber	%	Num- ber	%	Num- ber	%	Num- ber	%
1	242	19.0	67	5.3	722	56.7	244	19.0	1,275	100
2	190	13.4	79	5.5	935	66.2	207	14.9	1,411	100
3	190	13.0	59	4.0	926	63.8	277	19.2	1,452	100
4	76	4.4	25	1.6	1,612	92.0	29	2.0	1,742	100
5	230	17.0	52	3.5	912	64.5	216	15.0	1,410	100
6	414	32.2	129	10.0	485	37.9	254	19.9	1,282	100
7	379	25.3	182	12.1	508	33.6	431	29.0	1,500	100
8	413	28.0	92	6.0	603	41.0	386	25.0	1,494	100
Totals	2,134	18.0	685	5.9	6,703	58.8	2,044	17.3	11,566	100

Table 3.

Area covered by Welfare Department Supervisory Units

- Unit 1. Albany, Berkeley (except bordering on N. Oakland).
- Unit 2. Lower Berkeley, Rockridge & Temescal in Oakland and all of Emeryville.
- Unit 3. Parts of Piedmont and Trestle Glen, Montclair, Forest Park, Oakmore and Temescal Districts of Oakland.
- Unit 4. West Oakland to Lake Merritt and from 21st Street to the Estuary.
- Unit 5. City of Alameda, parts of Fruitvale, Dimond & Melrose in Oakland.
- Unit 6. Parts of Oakmore, Millsmont, Dimond, Seminary, Oak Knoll Districts of Oakland.
- Unit 7. Part of Eastmont, Seminary, Elmhurst, all of Brookfield Village, in Oakland. All of San Leandro, as well as parts of Hayward.
- Unit 8. Southern Alameda County including Castro Valley, San Lorenzo, parts of Hayward, Livermore, Sunol, Pleasanton, Russell City, Mt. Eden, Fremont, Newark, and Union City.

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Unit 6. Parts of Oakmore, Willamont, Dimond, Seminary, Oak Knoll District of Oakland.

Unit 5. City of Alameda, parts of Fruitvale, Dimond & Melrose in Oakland.

Unit 4. West Oakland to Lake Merritt and from 21st Street to the Estuary.

Unit 3. Parts of Redmont and Treble Glen, Montclair, Forest Park, Oakmore and Temescal Districts of Oakland.

Unit 2. Lower Berkeley, Rockridge & Temescal in Oakland and all of Emeryville.

Unit 1. Albany, Berkeley (except bordering on W. Oakland).

Table 3.
Area covered by Welfare Department Supervisory Units

Unit	Own Home Clear Title Num- ber	Own Home Mortgaged Num- ber	Rent Num- ber	Other Num- ber	Totals Num- ber
1	285	23	252	24	1,275
2	190	22	232	207	1,411
3	190	22	226	277	1,452
4	76	22	1,612	22	1,742
5	230	22	212	216	1,410
6	141	122	182	254	1,282
7	372	182	208	137	1,200
8	123	22	603	386	1,491
Totals	5,131	682	6,703	2,041	11,555

Table 2.
Comparison of Home Ownership by Areas

Ratings made by Welfare Workers

The rating scale used by welfare workers and the ratings they made appears in Tables 4 & 5. Coupled with the written definitions of defects of housing to look for, the 42 workers evaluated the homes of 11,566 O.A.S. recipients. They report that 2,200 or 19.2% of the homes visited fell in the category of excellent; 3,839 or 33.5% were good; 3,223, or 27.8% were found to be adequate, 1,390, or 11.5% poor, and 916 or 8% were reported as below minimum standards.

Since the rating scale used included factors affecting the welfare of older persons that cannot be classified as structural defects, the score registered does not give an accurate index of housing decay or code violations. The rating scale does, however, give a good picture of the number of O.A.S. recipients who live in housing which does not meet their needs. For example, the rating scale marks as a defect, inaccessibility to shopping, church, or public transportation, and disproportionately high cost of shelter. It should be remembered that with shrunken budgets and declining physical strength, housing that may be adequate for the young, vigorous family with earned income, may create an intolerable burden for the older person. In fact, those who visit old people in their own homes know only too well that many old people fight a losing battle trying to maintain property that is too large for their needs, and that the cost of repairs to the fabric of older houses is often beyond the means of the retired person's budget. Therefore, a tally of structural defects only while revealing the decay of housing, will not fully reflect the adequacy of the housing to the special needs of older people.

Combining the three categories of "Excellent," "Good," and "Adequate," we find that 9,262 homes, or 80% of all of the homes rated by the workers are included. The rating of "Adequate," however, allows for two major defects, and under certain conditions, two major defects might prove too difficult for a frail older person to handle. Nevertheless, it is reassuring to find that 80% of the O.A.S. recipients in Alameda County are either well housed or reasonably well housed.

This is not the case with 1,390 who live in homes rated as poor, nor with the 916 who live in dwellings rated as below standard. Together, these houses total 2,306 or 20% of the total visited. According to the rating scale, a poor dwelling must have three major defects which present serious problems to the occupant; while a below minimum standard rating was made when the home had more than three major defects, or was unsafe or hazardous to the occupant.

Table 4. - Ratings by Welfare Workers of O.A.S. Recipients' Dwellings

Unit	A		B		C		D		E	
	Excellent		Good		Adequate		Poor		Below Standard	
	Num- ber	%	Num- ber	%	Num- ber	%	Num- ber	%	Num- ber	%
1										
1,275	404	31.6	540	42.3	297	23.2	29	2.2	5	0.4
2										
1,411	195	13.9	546	38.7	465	33.0	142	10.0	63	4.4
3										
1,452	222	15.2	498	34.2	573	39.6	151	10.4	8	0.6
4										
1,742	198	11.3	195	11.2	290	16.7	445	25.5	614	35.3
5										
1,410	244	17.3	461	32.6	519	36.8	130	9.2	58	4.1
6										
1,282	286	22.4	399	31.2	323	25.2	218	17.0	56	4.1
7										
1,500	365	24.3	702	46.8	335	22.3	82	5.4	16	1.0
8										
1,494	286	19.2	498	33.3	421	28.1	193	12.9	96	6.5
Totals	2200	19.2	3839	33.5	3223	27.8	1390	11.5	916	8.0

Table 5. - Key to Rating Scale

- a. Excellent: Home is comfortable, not too large, nor with too many stairs, is in good condition, has adequate plumbing, is light and pleasant. Owner is able to make needed repairs. There is easy access to shopping, church, and public transportation. Cost of upkeep or rent is moderate and does not strain the budget.
- b. Good: As above, with one major defect; for example, too many stairs, too far from shopping, rent too high, or upkeep too demanding.
- c. Adequate: Home provides good shelter at reasonable cost, but has two major defects, e.g., it is too large and requires too much work, plumbing is inadequate, roof leaks, out-door area is too large, etc.
- d. Poor: Home has three major defects which present serious problems to the resident and which would involve costly repairs and leave a less than satisfactory dwelling even were such repairs made.
- e. Below Minimum Standards: Home is dismal, uncomfortable, remote from shopping, and unsafe or hazardous to the occupant. It has more than three major defects as above.

Table 1. - Ratings by Welfare Workers of O.A.S. recipients' Dwellings

Unit	A		B		C		D		E	
	Num- ber	%	Num- ber	%	Num- ber	%	Num- ber	%	Num- ber	%
1,275	104	31.6	210	12.3	297	23.2	29	2.2	2	0.1
1,111	192	31.9	216	38.7	162	33.0	112	10.0	63	1.1
1,152	222	25.2	198	31.2	273	39.6	121	10.1	8	0.6
1,712	198	11.3	192	11.2	220	16.9	112	25.2	611	35.3
1,110	214	17.3	161	32.6	279	36.8	130	9.2	28	1.1
1,282	286	22.1	399	31.2	323	25.2	218	17.0	26	1.1
1,500	362	21.3	702	16.8	332	22.3	82	2.1	16	1.0
1,121	286	19.2	192	33.3	121	28.1	123	12.9	28	6.2
Totals	2200	19.2	3832	33.2	3223	27.8	1320	11.2	216	8.0

Table 2. - Key to Rating Scale

- a. Excellent: Home is comfortable, not too large, nor with too many stairs, is in good condition, has adequate plumbing, is light and pleasant. Owner is able to make needed repairs. There is easy access to shopping, church, and public transportation. Cost of upkeep or rent is moderate and does not strain the budget.
- b. Good: As above, with one major defect; for example, too many stairs, too far from shopping, rent too high, or upkeep too demanding.
- c. Adequate: Home provides good shelter at reasonable cost, but has two major defects, e.g., it is too large and requires too much work, plumbing is inadequate, roof leaks, out-door area is too large, etc.
- d. Poor: Home has three major defects which present serious problems to the resident and which would involve costly repairs and leave a less than satisfactory dwelling even were such repairs made.
- e. Below Minimum Standards: Home is dismal, uncomfortable, remote from shopping, and unsafe or hazardous to the occupant. It has more than three major defects as above.

The welfare workers were asked to include a description of the worst home they visit. Eleven descriptions of homes occupied by O.A.S. recipients follow. Here in the workers' words are homes drawn from the 8% marked as below minimum standard:

CASE FROM U1-1

The poorest dwelling in my case load appears to be a basement converted into an apartment that contains many hazards because of the recipients unsteady walking ability. The entrance way is an abrupt cement well containing two widely spaced steps with no hand railing. The floors are wooden, placed over the original concrete and uneven. The two rooms are poorly lighted both from sunlight and artificial lighting and the doors are in disrepair making them difficult to open or close. The house is adequately clean considering the condition which makes neat housekeeping very difficult.

CASE FROM U1-4

Man and wife both on Old Age Security live in a very old house. They are renting. Owners rarely make repairs, house needs painting badly. Steep stairs leading up to house are rotted through. Inside the paint is thin, dirty, and peeling. Stove, refrigerator, etc., very old and inadequate. All the rooms are run down and dirty.

CASE FROM U2-2

Recipient lives alone in a three-room basement apartment, rented, furnished with all utilities included for \$25 monthly. The first floor is many steps above the ground level and shuts out lighting from windows in basement apartment where recipient lives. Recipient uses oven from gas cooking stove to provide warmth. This is insufficient and leaves an odor from the fumes. The rooms smell musty from dampness or lack of circulation. There is no bathroom or toilet in connection with the apartment. The recipient must go outdoors and up steps to another apartment for this facility. The apartment is close to shopping and transportation.

This is a case where the recipient does not wish to move, although she has been told her grant could be increased to allow better housing.

CASE FROM U5-1

Poorest dwelling is a converted garage. It has no toilet or bath. Lighting inadequate. There is one room (multi-purpose) and kitchenette with hot-plate. Recipient uses chamber pot which he empties into shared toilet facilities in main dwelling unit. However, he claims he is happy there and likes his living arrangements.

CASE FROM U6-3

The poorest dwelling in which I have found an Old Age recipient living is a small nine by twelve foot cottage. This building was originally built for a children's playhouse. It has six feet of head room only in the exact center of its one room. The ceilings slope so there is about four feet clearance against the walls, no insulation, with the low roof the room is either hot or cold. There is no plumbing or heating, and only one inadequate light fixture. The floors are built directly on the ground, so they are both damp and uneven. In addition to this, there is no convenient shopping area, or bus line within easy walking distance.

The welfare workers were asked to include a description of the worst home they visit. Eleven descriptions of homes occupied by O.A.G. recipients follow. Here in the workers' words are homes given the 82 marked as below minimum standards:

CASE FROM U1-1

The poorest dwelling in my case load appears to be a basement converted into an apartment that contains many hazards because of the recipients' untidy walking ability. The entrance way is an abrupt cement well containing two widely spaced steps with no hand railing. The floors are wooden, placed over the original concrete and uneven. The two rooms are poorly lighted both from sunlight and artificial lighting and the doors are in disrepair making them difficult to open or close. The house is absolutely clean considering the condition which makes neat housekeeping very difficult.

CASE FROM U1-4

Man and wife both on Old Age Security live in a very old house. They are renting. Owners rarely make repairs, house needs painting badly. Steep stairs leading up to house are rotten through. Inside the paint is thin, dirty, and peeling. Stove, refrigerator, etc., very old and inadequate. All the rooms are run down and dirty.

CASE FROM U2-2

Recipient lives alone in a three-room basement apartment, rented, furnished with all utilities included for \$25 monthly. The first floor is many steps above the ground level and shuts out lighting from windows in basement apartment where recipient lives. Recipient sees over from gas cooking stove to provide warmth. This is insufficient and leaves an odor from the fumes. The rooms smell musty from dampness or lack of circulation. There is no bathroom or toilet in connection with the apartment. The recipient must go outdoors and up steps to another apartment for this facility. The apartment is close to shopping and transportation.

This is a case where the recipient does not wish to move, although she has been told her grant could be increased to allow better housing.

CASE FROM U2-1

Poorest dwelling is a converted garage. It has no toilet or bath. Lighting inadequate. There is one room (multi-purpose) and kitchenette with hot-plate. Recipient uses chamber pot which he empties into shared toilet facilities in main dwelling unit. However, he claims he is happy there and likes his living arrangements.

CASE FROM U2-3

The poorest dwelling in which I have found an Old Age recipient living is a small nine by twelve foot cottage. This building was originally built for a children's playhouse. It has six feet of head room only in the exact center of its one room. The ceilings slope so there is about four foot clearance against the walls, no insulation, with the low roof the room is either hot or cold. There is no plumbing or heating, and only one inadequate light fixture. The floors are built directly on the ground, so they are both damp and uneven. In addition to this, there is no convenient shopping area, or bus line within easy walking distance.

CASE FROM U6-4

The poorest dwelling I have visited as an old age security worker was one occupied by a single man in his eighties. He lives in one room which apparently was a storage room attached to a garage located in the rear of the main house. It is close to the ground. The only plumbing is a toilet. Heating is from a wood burning potbelly type stove. It was only large enough for a bed, a chair, and a trunk for storage.

CASE FROM U6-5

The poorest dwelling I visit as an Old Age Social Worker is a two-room apartment located at the top of an extremely narrow, steep, and poorly lighted stairway. The rooms are very small and dark and have inadequate ventilation. They are also in need of redecoration. The recipient must share a bath with several other persons. The apartment is also inconveniently located as it is some distance from a shopping area, bus line, and medical officer.

CASE FROM U8-1

This seventy-six year old man occupies a dilapidated one room rear shack with approximately 8 x 10 floor space and one door. In it are his bed, a hot plate, a kerosene heating stove, two chests, and one chair. There are no sanitary facilities, no running water, toilet, or bath. The man has access to toilet facilities in the owner's house in front. The unfinished board walls are streaked and stained with age and the bare floor has an accumulation of dust which is swept under the bed and into corners. The lighting consists of one drop cord hung from the ceiling and one very dirty window. For these accommodations, he pays \$20 per month, including his electricity and water. He buys his own kerosene for heat. He does little cooking at home. Most of his meals are eaten in a restaurant. He has a small fox terrier dog with him constantly and keeps unwashed dishes for its food and water on the floor.

CASE FROM U8-2

The house itself resembles a large shed and the front is decorated with an advertisement for chewing tobacco. The only usable door is the entrance to the back porch, where Mr. J. sleeps on a dirty cot. The porch overlooks Mr. J's private junk yard and the outhouse - there is no indoor toilet. From the porch one enters the kitchen. The room is small, dim, and dirty. Cooking facilities are provided by a coalstove, and well water is pumped into the sink. The "front room" until fairly recently housed two goats and a number of chickens and has never been reconverted to living quarters. Dirt seeps up through the rotting floor boards and through cracks in the walls. Keeping the place clean would probably be an impossible task.

CASE FROM U8-4

This three-room cottage is located in a rustic setting and is therefore unnoticed by most people. It is centered in an upper-middle class residential area that is marked by attractive, well-built homes.

The cottage is so run down that it is beyond repair. The foundation is poor. The baseboards have rotted and, as a result, the dampness from the ground seeps into the house. The occupants, Mr. and Mrs. X, are constantly bothered by this dampness since there is only one heater in the house. The outside paint on the house is faded and cracked. The front door has a large "cat" hole at the bottom

CASE FROM US-1

The poorest dwelling I have visited as an old age security worker was one occupied by a single man in his eighties. He lives in one room which apparently was a storage room attached to a garage located in the rear of the main house. It is close to the ground. The only plumbing is a toilet. Heating is from a wood burning potbelly type stove. It was only large enough for a bed, a chair, and a trunk for storage.

CASE FROM US-2

The poorest dwelling I visit as an Old Age Social Worker is a two-room apartment located at the top of an extremely narrow, steep, and poorly lighted stairway. The rooms are very small and dark and have inadequate ventilation. They are also in need of redecoration. The resident must share a bath with several other persons. The apartment is also inconveniently located as it is some distance from a shopping area, bus line, and medical officer.

CASE FROM US-1

This seventy-six year old man occupies a dilapidated one room rear shack with approximately 8 x 10 floor space and one door. In it are his bed, a hot plate, a kerosene heating stove, two chests, and one chair. There are no sanitary facilities, no running water, toilet, or bath. The man has access to toilet facilities in the owner's house in front. The whitewashed board walls are streaked and stained with age and the bare floor has an accumulation of dust which is swept under the bed and into corners. The lighting consists of one drop cord lamp from the ceiling and one very dirty window. For these accommodations, he pays \$20 per month, including his electricity and water. He buys his own kerosene for heat. He does little cooking at home. Most of his meals are eaten in a restaurant. He has a small fox terrier dog with him constantly and keeps unwashed dishes for his food and water on the floor.

CASE FROM US-2

The house itself resembles a large shed and the front is decorated with an advertisement for chewing tobacco. The only usable door is the entrance to the back porch, where Mr. J. sleeps on a dirty cot. The porch overlooks Mr. J.'s private junk yard and the outdoors - there is no indoor toilet. From the porch one enters the kitchen. The room is small, dim, and dirty. Cooking facilities are provided by a coalstove, and well water is pumped into the sink. The "front room" until fairly recently housed two goats and a number of chickens and has never been reconvered to living quarters. Dirt seeps up through the rotting floor boards and through cracks in the walls. Keeping the place clean would probably be an impossible task.

CASE FROM US-1

This three-room cottage is located in a rustic setting and is therefore unnoticed by most people. It is centered in an upper-middle class residential area that is marked by attractive, well-built homes.

The cottage is so run down that it is beyond repair. The foundation is poor. The baseboards have rotted and, as a result, the dampness from the ground seeps into the house. The occupants, Mr. and Mrs. X, are constantly bothered by this dampness since there is only one heater in the house. The outside paint on the house is faded and cracked. The front door has a large "cat" hole at the bottom

which cannot be blocked. There are a number of stray cats in the area, and they often investigate the insides of the cottage. There is a screen door, but it will not close, so that the house is always littered with flies.

The inside of the home is dark and dirty. The inhabitants attempt to clean the floors and walls but the walls and floors are so old and the dirt is so embedded in them that little headway can be made. The plumbing has been entirely inadequate. The pipes leak and often times produce only cold water. The laundry must be done on the front lawn since there are no washing facilities in the house. The cottage rents for \$75.

CASE FROM U8-6

The poorest dwelling consists of a 12' x 15' one room shack with rough board floor and a patched and makeshift roof. No electricity, he cooks with kerosene and has no heating facilities. No running water (not even a well on the property). All water is brought in from town in a bucket via bicycle. There are no bathing or toilet facilities. The shack is surrounded by a rough overgrown field on one side and swampy salt flats on the other. The only path from his shack to the road is over a board walk about 2' in width and approximately 75' in length over which he rides his bicycle. The boards are loose and rotting and have broken through in occasional spots. He buries his wet garbage but piles the cans next to his shack. The pile has become enormous as the man has resided there for many years. He shares his room with innumerable cats.

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From the foregoing descriptions, it is evident that at least a few old people in Alameda County live in dwellings unfit for human beings. In setting up the rating scale used in this survey, an attempt has been made to combine the physical or structural defects of the property with the social factors which affect the use of the property by the resident. The housing described in this study as poor, might, therefore, with younger tenants, pass through and fall into the adequate group.

With the houses in the lowest rating of below minimum standard, there are a large number of structural defects in the homes so that it is highly improbable that a house in the lower group could pass muster and be labeled adequate should it have younger tenants. A rating scale that took into account merely the structural or the physical defects of a dwelling would fail to recognize that housing should be suitable to the needs of those who are to use it. It will be noted that the highest proportion of unsuitable housing is located in West Oakland. (U-4) The welfare workers in this part of Oakland found 614 or 35.3% of the houses below standard and 445 or 25.5% poor. In all, a total of 1,059 homes, or 60.8% were inadequate, while 683 or 39.2% were in the adequate, good, and excellent categories. Since 1,742 O.A.S. Recipients live in the West Oakland Area, it is well that the City of Oakland has underway a housing project for senior citizens. This project will contain 100 units to house couples or single old people. It is to be hoped that the Oakland Redevelopment Program in West Oakland will make some provision for re-housing the large number of O.A.S. Recipients who, although inadequately housed, still call West Oakland home!

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Three other supervisory units show a high proportion of housing in the poor and below standard categories. Supervisory unit 2 (including lower Berkeley, Rockridge, and Temescal districts of Oakland and Emeryville) shows 205 dwellings, or 14.4% of the total dwellings occupied by O.A.S. Recipients in that district in the poor and below standard categories. Supervisory Unit 6 has 274 dwellings in the poor and below standard ratings, 21.1% of the total dwellings occupied by O.A.S. Recipients in that unit, while Unit 8 has 289 homes in these two categories, 19.4% of the total O.A.S. homes in that unit. Unit 6 takes in parts of Oakmont, Millsmont, Dimond, Seminary, and Oak Knoll Districts of Oakland. Unit 8 covers Southern Alameda County including Castro Valley, San Lorenzo, parts of Hayward, Livermore, Sunol, Pleasanton, Russell City, Mt. Eden, Fremont, Newark, and Union City.

In contrast to the housing problems of O.A.S. Recipients in West Oakland who occupy housing usually over fifty years old, which was formerly used as single family dwellings and has now deteriorated to unplanned, multiple dwellings; the poor and below standard homes of Unit 8 in Southern Alameda County appear to be rural slums, converted summer shacks, garages, and chicken houses, not really intended as permanent dwellings. There is little to choose between the city and country slums represented in these unsatisfactory dwellings. Certainly there is a need to eliminate all of the sub-standard dwellings occupied by O.A.S. Recipients whether these be located in city or in rural districts.

Conclusions

1. Home ownership among O.A.S. Recipients in Alameda County is lower than home ownership among the whole age group over 65 throughout the nation.
2. Welfare workers found 80% of all dwellings occupied by O.A.S. recipients in the three categories of adequate, good, and excellent; and 20% in the categories of poor and below standard.
3. Home ownership was more characteristic of some areas of the county than others, it was low in West Oakland and high in the Oakmont, Dimond, Seminary, Oak Knoll Districts.
4. Although some poor and below standard housing occupied by O.A.S. Recipients was found in every part of the county, West Oakland, and Southern Alameda County Districts showed the worst concentrations of poor and sub-standard dwellings occupied by O.A.S. Recipients.
5. The welfare workers rated 2,306 dwellings in the poor and below standard categories. Since a house has to be very unsuitable to the needs of older people to fall into this rating, it would appear that a minimum of 2,306 units of specially designed, low cost, independent flats, apartments, or bungalows is needed for this age group.

Respectfully submitted,

for Alameda County Welfare Department
William E. Rainey, Assistant Director

for Council of Social Planning - Alameda County
Gladys Worthington, Social Planning Consultant

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4. Although some poor and below standard housing occupied by O.A.S. recipients was found in every part of the county, West Oakland, and Southern Alameda County Districts showed the worst concentrations of poor and sub-standard dwellings occupied by O.A.S. recipients.

3. Home ownership was more characteristic of some areas of the county than others; it was low in West Oakland and high in the Oakland, Diamond, Seminary, Oak Knoll Districts.

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Conclusions

These findings all of the sub-standard dwellings occupied by O.A.S. recipients whether they be located in city or in rural districts. Certainly there is a need to represented in these unsatisfactory dwellings. There is little to choose between the city and country slums converted summer shacks, garages, and chicken houses, not really intended as dwellings and has now deteriorated to unplanned, multiple dwellings; the poor and housing usually over fifty years old, which was formerly used as single family In contrast to the housing problems of O.A.S. recipients in West Oakland who occupy

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